

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

ICA-11 /071 W

-----081339 111443Z /53

R 110948Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4089

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 5618

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SHUM, RP

SUBJ: LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS: GOP MOVES AGAINST LABAN DEMONSTRATORS,  
FOREIGN MEDDLERS AND FOREIGN PRESS

REF: MANILA 5515

1. SUMMARY: 561 LABAN LEADERS, CANDIDATES AND FOLLOWERS  
ARRESTED APRIL 9 HAVE BEEN CHARGED WITH ILLEGAL ASSEMBLY,  
SEDITION AND INCITING TO SEDITION. PRESIDENT MARCOS SAID  
HE HAS "LIFTED" THE PERIOD OF FREE DEBATE AND IS CLAMPING  
DOWN BECAUSE REVOLUTIONARY OPPOSITIONIST S ARE RESORTING TO  
"AGITPROP" AFTER FAILING AT THE POLLS. COMELEC PLANS TO  
INVESTIGATE FOREIGN MEDDLING AND WILL SUBMIT A FULL REPORT  
TO THE NEW LEGISLATURE. FOREIGN JOURNALISTS ARE BEING  
ACCUSED OF HELPING PLAN OPPOSITION DEMONSTRATIONS; THEY ARE  
NOW REQUIRED TO WEAR A LARGE BADGE TO HELP DISTINGUISH THEM  
FROM "AGENTS PROVOCATEUR." END SUMMARY.

2. ACTION AGAINST LABAN DEMONSTRATORS. THE 561 DEMONSTRATORS  
ARRESTED APRIL 9, INCLUDING OPPOSITION LABAN LEADERS AND  
CANDIDATES, HAVE BEEN FORMALLY CHARGED WITH ILLEGAL ASSEMBLY,  
SEDITION AND INCITING TO SEDITION. ACCORDING TO MANILA  
PRESS APRIL 11, THEY WERE ORIGINALLY DETAINED JUST ON  
CHARGES OF ILLEGAL ASSEMBLY. THEY WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE  
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A PANEL OF MILITARY INVESTIGATORS FOR A SUMMARY PRELIMINARY  
INVESTIGATION (SPI), AND THEY WILL BE GIVEN TEN DAYS TO  
ANSWER PROSECUTION CHARGES. SIX NUNS AND ONE PRIEST ARRESTED  
WIIT GROUP HAVE BEEN ORDERED RELEASED BY PRESIDENT  
MARCOS, ALTHOUGH CHARGES ON THEM REMAIN; ALL OTHERS, TO OUR  
KNOWLEDGE, REMAIN IN DETENTION AT EITHER BICUTAN OR CAMP  
CRAME.

3. MANILA DAILIES APRIL 11 QUOTE TEXT OF LAW (ARTICLE 146 OF PENAL CODE) REGARDING ILLEGAL ASSEMBLY. PENALTY FOR ORGANIZING OR LEADING A MEETING ATTENDED BY ARMED PERSONS OR A MEETING WHERE PEOPLE ARE INCITED TO TREASON, REBELLION OR INSURRECTION IS MINIMUM SIX YEARS AND MAXIMUM ABOUT TEN YEARS. ANYONE CARRYING AN UNLICENSED FIREARM AT SUCH A MEETING IS CONSIDERED A LEADER. ANYONE MERELY ATTENDING SUCH A MEETING IS LIABLE FOR ONE TO SIX MONTHS IMPRISONMENT. SEDITION AND INCITING SEDITION CARRY ROUGHLY SIX-YEAR PENALTIES, PLUS FINES.

4. OPPOSITION LEADER JOVITO SALONGA, AFTER CONFERRING WITH THE DETAINED LABAN LEADERS, TOLD THE PRESS HE DOES NOT PLAN TO FILE A WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS FOR THEIR RELEASE AT THIS TIME.

5. AT A CABINET MEETING APRIL 10 FOREIGN SECRETARY ROMULO REPORTEDLY TOOK THE LEAD IN SPONSORING A RESOLUTION URGING PRESIDENT MARCOS TO ENFORCE FULLY THE PENAL PROVISIONS OF THE LAW ON ILLEGAL ASSEMBLY.

6. IN PRESS RELEASES FOLLOWING THE CABINET MEETING (A PRESS CONFERENCE WAS CALLED BUT THEN CANCELLED), MARCOS SAID THAT THE FREE DEBATE PERIOD DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGN HAS NOW BEEN "LIFTED." HE SAID THAT SUBVERSIVES WITHIN  
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LABAN GROUP HAVE CONCEDED THE FAILURE OF THEIR "PARLIAMENTARY STRUGGLE" STRATEGY FOR REVOLUTION IN THE PHILIPPINES AND HAVE NOW REVERTED TO "AGITPROP." MARCOS ADDED THAT HE WILL NOT REIMPOSE CURFEW AT THIS TIME, BUT WILL KEEP THIS OPTION OPEN FOR FUTURE USE IF NEEDED.

7. DAILY EXPRESS EDITORIAL APRIL 11, OSTENSIBLY SUMMARIZING THE MOOD OF THE CABINET MEETING, SAID: "THE PRESIDENT SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAS ADOPTED A 'PREEMPTIVE AND PREVENTATIVE' POLICY TO ABORT SUCH OUTBREAKS .... THE PRESIDENT MADE CLEAR THIS IS AND WILL BE GOVERNMENT POLICY FOR NOW ON. NO OPPORTUNITY WILL BE GIVEN TO SUBVERSIVES TO START AN ORGANIZED ILLEGAL GATHERING, MUCH LESS TO GET THEM ON THE ROAD AND BRING ABOUT THE VIOLENCE AND VANDALISM THAT MARKED THEIR 'NOISE DEMONSTRATION.'" ... THE GOVERNMENT, HE EMPHASIZED, WILL NEVER ACT EXTRA-LEGALLY BUT WILL CERTAINLY ENFORCE THE LAW TO THE FULLEST."

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MANILA 5618

8. ACTION AGAINST FOREIGN MEDDLING. MEANWHILE, COMELEC CHAIRMAN PEREX ANNOUNCED APRIL 10 THAT COMELEC WILL INVESTIGATE ALLEGATIONS OF FOREIGN MEDDLING AS PART OF ITS CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE OF RECOMMENDING LEGISLATION REELECTION PROCEDURES. HE SAID COMELEC WILL SUBMIT A REPORT, INCLUDING ITS FINDINGS ON FOREIGN MEDDLING, TO THE INTERIM LEGISLATURE. THE COMELEC DECISION TO INVESTIGATE, PEREZ SAID, IS BASED ON: PRESIDENT MARCOS' STATEMENTS ON THE SUBJECT; "REPORTS OF SOME OPPOSITION-ORIENTED POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE VISAYAS CLAIMING THAT AN OFFICIAL OF A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT OFFERED THEM ASSISTANCE IN THE CAMPAIGN;" COMPLAINTS THAT FOREIGN RELIGIOUS PERSONS HAD CAMPAIGNED FOR OPPOSITION CANDIDATES; AND REPORTS OF CIA MEDDLING AND GENERALIZED FOREIGN PARTICIPATION IN DEMONSTRATIONS AND RIOTS. PEREZ SAID HE WILL CALL FOR TESTIMONY FROM IMMIGRATION COMMISSIONER REYES, SCHOOL TEACHERS WHO SUPERVISED PRECINCT VOTING, AND "THE HEAD OF A POLITICAL GROUP IN THE VISAYAS."

9. ACTION AGAINST FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS. AT THE APRIL 10 CABINET MEETING, ROMULO REPORTEDLY COMPLAINED THAT LABAN LEADERS CAREFULLY SAID AND DID EVERYTHING IN THE PRESENCE OF FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS AND FOR THEIR "BENEFIT AND CONSUMPTION." ROMULO ALSO SAID THAT FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS  
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HAD PARTICIPATED IN A LABAN MEETING WHERE THE APRIL 6 "NOISE BARRAGE" AND OTHER ACTIVITIES WERE PLOTTED. "THEY WERE THERE NOT MERELY AS CORRESPONDENTS COVERING AN EVENT, BUT IN FACT WERE CONTRIBUTING COMMENTS AND

SUGGESTIONS AND, IN SHORT, TAKING AN ACTIVE PART IN THE DISCUSSION." ROMULO SAID HE WANTED TO KNOW HOW MANY SUPPOSED CORRESPONDENTS WHO CAME TO MANILA FOR THE ELECTION WERE LEGITIMATE NEWSMEN AND HOW MANY WERE USING PRESS CREDENTIALS TO COVER UP THEIR REAL IDENTITIES AND THE TRUE NATURE OF THEIR PRESENCE IN MANILA.

10. THE SAME DAY, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION ISSUED REGULATIONS REQUIRING ALL FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS, WHETHER BASED IN MANILA OR OVERSEAS, "TO WEAR CONSPICUOUS IDENTIFICATION TAGS (SHOWING NAMES AND ORGANIZATIONS IN LARGE PRINT) WHEN COVERING PUBLIC EVENTS, TO DISTINGUISH THEM FROM AGENTS PROVOCATEUR MASQUERADING AS JOURNALISTS." DPI BUREAU DIRECTOR LORENZO CRUZ SAID CORRESPONDENTS HAD MINGLED WITH THE CROWD APRIL 9 AND POLICE HAD HAD TROUBLE "DISTINGUISHING THE LEGITIMATE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS FROM FOREIGN SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS." FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS MUST ALSO CARRY DPI IDENTITY CARDS. CRUZ SAID THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS' ASSOCIATION HAS BEEN ASKED TO HELP THE GOP SCREEN THE FOREIGN PRESS COMMUNITY. "THIS WILL HELP US ENSURE THE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT OF THE LEGITIMATE PRESS." STULL

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## Message Attributes

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